



The Harbinger

Newsletter of the
Illinois Native Plant Society

Spring 2021
Vol. 38, No. 1

"... dedicated to the study, appreciation, and conservation of the native flora and natural communities of Illinois."



Skunk cabbage. Ogle County in early March. Photo: Mary Lynn Rossi-Buckner.

Spring is the most wonderful time of the year in my opinion and with Covid-19 vaccinations becoming more widely available, it seems like normalcy is around the corner. I hope INPS chapters can resume in-person events soon and that you are able to get outdoors to enjoy the spring ephemeral wildflowers. There's tremendous diversity of plant life in Illinois and your support of INPS helps ensure their long-term survival.

✂ Chris Benda, Editor

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Message from the President



Happy spring! I am thrilled to be taking on the role of President of the Illinois Native Plant Society. Before being elected to President, I spent a year on the state governing board as an at-large member and I served on the grants committee. I am excited to help continue our mission and spread the love of native plants.

I hope you are enjoying the sights and sounds of spring after a winter that seemed to last forever. Our state and chapter governing boards continued to meet over the winter and plan for the year. In-person field trips have already resumed for some chapters, and others will start soon. Our grants program has been busy reviewing grant proposals. Although our Central Chapter will not be holding their plant sale this year, there are many other native plant sales and some are already taking orders. Please find out more about native plant sales in your area by checking our website, <https://illinoisplants.org/native-plant-sales/>.

We do not yet have a decision about the format of our Annual Gathering due to the pandemic, but we will notify members as soon as we know more. We are planning to have some sort of event, but the details, including when, are still being worked out.

In the meantime, have fun participating in the Illinois Botanist's Big Year on iNaturalist.org (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/illinois-botanists-big-year-2021>) or through the iNaturalist app. You can upload photos of plants you see, and you can help identify other users' plant photos.



The pandemic has isolated us all, but also made it easier to attend events as so many things moved online. Please see our INPS website and past Harbinger issues for events that were recorded.

As we acknowledge the excellent work done in the past by our members and board, the board is considering ways to expand our activities to continue our mission and making sure it reaches many people. I would like to ask each member to consider how we can make the INPS more inclusive. What makes you feel welcome and included in our organization and at events? What could you do to make someone else feel welcome and included? If you have ideas for ways to improve our society and expand our reach, please let me or your chapter president know.

Please note that our mailing address has changed and is now INPS,
PO Box 60694, Chicago, IL 60660

Emily Dangremond

President INPS

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Check out the [Illinois Native Plant Society Events Calendar](#) for Chapter meetings and workshops.

Welcome New Members

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Pat Gunnerson

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Sai Ramakrishna

Neil Whitman

INPS News

Many Thanks for Generous Donations to Research & Survey Grants and for the General Fund.

INPS is grateful for generous donations given in 2020 for Research and Survey Grants and for the General Fund. These contributions help us expand our grant programs and our overall mission to study, appreciate and conserve the native flora and natural communities of Illinois. Starred names indicate donations of \$100 or more.

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INPS is also grateful to Supporting (S), Patron (P), and new Life Members (L) who contribute funds beyond basic membership that further support our mission.

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An Unexpected Adventure: How I Came to Own a Prairie

Article & Photos by Keith Horn

My lovely wife, Patty, and I were looking for some acreage to buy, mainly for recreation and letting our three boys and their friends, run around in and explore. I saw a "Land for Sale" sign while going through the small town of Ramsey, Illinois, located in north central Fayette County. This land for sale was approximately four miles east and then another mile south of town. I followed the signs and soon found the property. I called the real estate company and they said to go ahead and walk the property, and that all the boundaries were marked. This was in the third week of April in 2001.

As soon as I got out of my truck, I started noticing all kinds of flowering plants and shrubs. I knew some of the flowering trees, white dogwood, crab-apple, etc., but I only knew one or two of the spring wildflowers that were in bloom. I walked around for several hours and was amazed how the whole landscape was bursting with life! I called my wife on the cell phone and tried to describe the land to her and how showy it was with all the blooming wildflowers. I also called the real estate company and told them that I would put money down later that same day!

A total of 80 acres were for sale and we didn't want the farmland, we were only interested in the woodlands and wildflower fields. The previous landowners agreed to sell us 50 acres, with only 11 acres of cropland/farm fields, which we had to purchase so we could drive to the back area of the 50 acres where all the good stuff is.

We didn't close on the property until August 28 (our daughter's birthday), which meant that all summer long the land just grew wild!

There was a 15-acre "wild grass" hayfield and a 14-acre pasture area. The pasture had not been used in years and was getting overgrown with small trees and weeds. The wild grass hayfield was cut only once a year, usually in late August or early September, and baled. The old farmer said on dry years, the wild grass hayfield wasn't even worth cutting and baling. This land had been in the old farmer's family since the 1870s; the rolling, gravelly ground is not the best for farming, which is why it was never converted into croplands. Little did we know how much difference that would make!

So we just let the land grow wild in 2002 and 2003, and we saw many more wildflowers growing and blooming each year. In July of 2003, I contacted Gary Potts, the local IDNR representative, and told him about how there were hundreds of purple blazing star in bloom, mostly back in the "old pasture" area. I convinced Gary to come out and look for himself and to find out his thoughts. Should we just keep letting the land grow wild?

As soon as Gary and I got out of my truck, just across the old wire fence were hundreds of prairie blazing star in bloom, dancing and waving in the summer breeze. Gary was actually stunned! He looked at me and said, "I have never seen this many blazing stars in bloom in the wild before, only in restorations." Gary was so excited and said we needed to enroll the land into some kind of habitat program and immediately. Soon we had our "prairie farm" signed up and enrolled in a WHIP Program. (Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program), for five years.



Tractor and planter at work.



Getting ready to plant prairie seeds.

Over the winter of 2003/2004 Gary and I decided to do some restoration work on the 1½-acre and 9½-acre tracts that were now fallow farm fields. On June 4, 2004, the local farm service company came out and sprayed both tracts with "Plateau" herbicide, which took about 2 hours to complete. Then on June 14, 2004, the prairie restoration planting was going to occur. The DNR supplied six species of prairie grass seed and 17 species of wildflowers/forbs for the restoration planting. We paid for a quarter of the seed and herbicide treatment, which was a great deal for us! Also, over the late fall and early winter, we collected seed from 20 or so prairie plants from our original prairie, with just a few ounces of seed for some plants, and seed from others being several 5-gallon buckets full (we had several 5-gallon buckets of prairie blazing star seed for instance).

The restoration planting started around 8:30 a.m. on June 14, 2004 and took most of the day. The DNR supplied the special planter/drill and tractor. What a great deal for me! I actually thought mid-June was too late for planting, but the DNR guys all assured me that it was a good time for it. The rest of the early summer you could

see little plants emerging from the soil, then when late July and August came, it got hot and dry. I was very concerned and was wondering if the little plants would make it through the hot/dry conditions. By early fall, there still wasn't much "showing" out in the restorations, then winter came.

Soon it was spring/early summer of 2005 and the prairie restoration ground was green and some flowers were actually blooming. Wow, I couldn't hardly believe it! By June 26, 2005, just one year from the prairie planting, the restoration area was full of blooms! Mostly black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*), daisy fleabane (*Erigeron strigosus*), wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), but also some purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) and purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*). And I could even see several different types of prairie grass growing/coming up.



One year after prairie restoration planting and the restoration is in full bloom!



Prairie restoration in full bloom with New England aster, black-eyed Susans, and different prairie grasses.

By June and July of 2006, just two years after the land was converted from croplands to prairie restoration/wildflowers, the transformation was complete. If you didn't know it, you wouldn't believe that what was once farmland/soybean field was now a functioning prairie restoration, with many varieties of native wildflowers and prairie grasses!

If you ever have the chance, no matter how big or small the area, do a prairie restoration. I promise that you will be amazed and so glad you did.

Keith A. Horn, owner of Horn Prairie in Fayette County, Illinois.

Illinois Botanists Big Year 2020 Results

Mission: Find the most plant species in Illinois in 2020 and rejoice in your victory!

And the winner is...

Abel Kinser (@abelkinser) with 978 species!

As of 16 January 2021, @abelkinser had 1,301 Research Grade observations of 978 species for 2020. Congrats!

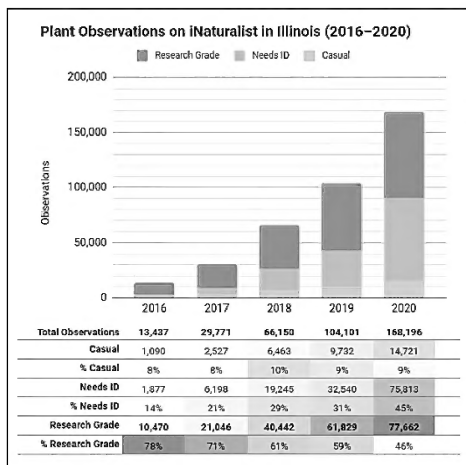
2020 Illinois Botanists Big Year Stats

- 5,930 observers
- 75,280 Research Grade observations of plants – 33% by people who had joined the project
- 2,000 species
- 1,960 identifiers

The Illinois Botanists Big Year is an annual friendly competition of the Illinois Native Plant Society to see how many species you can find in a single year in Illinois. The main goals of the project are to spark discovery in people of any age and experience, encouraging them to stop to look at plants they might have otherwise have passed by, as well as to create connections and build camaraderie among plant enthusiasts, share knowledge, and contribute to a growing database of the flora of Illinois. The year 2020 was its fifth year: 86 people joined the project, comprising around 33% of the qualifying observations.

The Illinois Botanists Big Year only looks at Research Grade observations (those that have identifications that have been confirmed by at least one other person), a rough tool to ensure a level of data quality. For 2020, only around half of the qualifying observations of plants have reached Research Grade in Illinois so far. A huge, huge thank you to the many identifiers who spend their time helping with this process. And a sustained call to action for anyone and everyone to help with identification. Even a rough ID like “plant,” “dicot,” “sunflower family,” or “goldenrod” can be incredibly helpful to narrow it down.

Congrats and well wishes for 2021 to you all!



MOST SPECIES

1. @abelkinser – 978
2. @sanguinaria33 – 731
3. @wildlandblogger – 722
4. @johnhboldt – 713
5. @elfaulkner – 592
6. @adriansydor – 577
7. @psweet – 537
8. @sedg – 477
9. @dziomber – 444
10. @benzerante – 433



MOST OBSERVATIONS

1. @johnhboldt – 3,239
2. @wildlandblogger – 1,749
3. @benzerante – 1,459
4. @abelkinser – 1,301
5. @sanguinaria33 – 1,176
6. @brdnrd – 1,084
7. @psweet – 1,049
8. @taco2000 – 1,020
9. @vnevirkov – 934
10. @sedg – 916



Check out lots of other stats and fun graphics at <https://illinoisplants.org/illinois-botanists-big-year-2020-results/>.

Effectiveness of Pollinator Gardens for Native Plant and Bee Conservation in Chicago

By Lauren Lynch, 2019 INPS Research Grant Program Recipient.

Introduction

As highly efficient pollinators with body structures designed specifically for the transport of pollen, bees play an essential role in the reproduction of many species of flowering plants. Unfortunately, these important ecosystems services have been threatened in recent years as populations of honey bees as well as many species of native bees have declined, posing a serious threat to the health of native plant communities around the world. In response, many nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies, and individuals who care about the well-being of our planet have directed their attention toward bee conservation.

One bee conservation strategy that has become very popular is the planting of pollinator gardens. Pollinator gardens can be planted on small plots of land, making them possible to install in urban as well as suburban and more rural areas, and do not require a high level of expertise to plant. Gardeners wishing for a bit of guidance and recognition can participate in pollinator garden registration programs such as those implemented by the [Illinois Extension Pollinator Pocket program](#), or the [Monarch Waystation program](#). These pollinator garden certification programs are assumed to provide a source of high-quality floral resources and to therefore be beneficial to bees. However, despite this assumption, the effectiveness of pollinator garden registration programs for bee conservation has never been formally evaluated. Therefore, in this study, I aim to evaluate the benefits that registered pollinator gardens provide to bees by comparing the floral resource availability and bee visitation observed in pollinator gardens to that observed in nearby ornamental gardens and lawns.



Pollinator garden registration signs at Keeler Gardens in Old Irving Park, Chicago.



Bumble bees feeding on Monarda at a school pollinator garden in La Grange, IL.

Methods

I began by identifying 13 pollinator gardens in the Greater Chicago Area. Some gardens were located near the downtown area, some in residential areas of Chicago, and some in suburbs and rural areas surrounding the city. For consistency, all of the pollinator gardens that I selected were registered as Monarch Waystations. I then paired each pollinator garden with an ornamental garden and a lawn located within 1.5 kilometers.

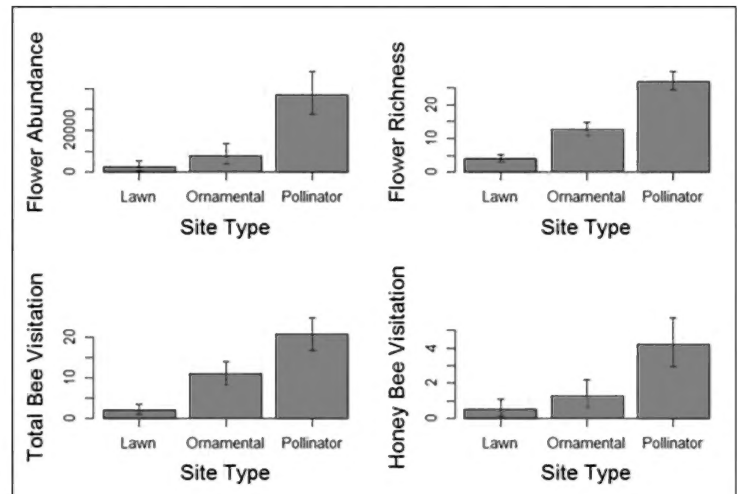
During the summer of 2019, between June 1 and August 12, I surveyed the flowering plants and bees in my study sites once every two weeks. I counted the total number of open blossoms present within each study site and identified all flowering plants to the lowest taxonomic level possible (genus, species, or hybrid variety). Each species of flowering plant observed was classified as native, nonnative, or a cultivated hybrid. I then spent

30 minutes walking slowly through the study site and recording all of the bees that I observed landing on the reproductive parts of flowers located within the site.

Results

I found that, on average, flower abundance was more than four times higher in pollinator gardens than in ornamental gardens, while flower richness (or the number of flower varieties present) was about two times higher in pollinator gardens than in ornamental gardens. This increased availability of floral resources appeared to correspond to increased visitation by bees. Overall bee visitation to pollinator gardens was nearly two times higher than overall bee visitation to ornamental gardens, and honey bee visitation to pollinator gardens was more than three times higher than to ornamental gardens.

Bar graphs showing the abundance and richness of flowers as well as the overall bee visitation and honey bee visitation observed in pollinator gardens, ornamental gardens, and lawns in the greater Chicago area during the summer of 2019. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.



However, it is also important to note that while pollinator gardens did contain a greater abundance and diversity of floral resources, they did not contain a greater proportion of native plants than ornamental gardens. Only about 35% of the flowering plant species observed in pollinator gardens were native to Illinois, compared to 34% of the species observed in ornamental gardens. While some native plants, such as *Aquilegia canadensis* (columbine), and several species of *Asclepias* (milkweed) and *Coreopsis* (tickseed) were common in pollinator gardens, ornamental (e.g., *Petunia x atkinsiana*, *Viola spp.*, *Impatiens spp.*) as well as weedy nonnatives (e.g., *Convolvulus arvensis* (field bindweed), *Medicago sativa* (alfalfa), *Trifolium repens* (white clover)) were also abundant.

Conclusions

The results of this study confirm the assumed benefits of pollinator gardens for bees. Pollinator gardens appear to provide a greater abundance and diversity of floral resources, and to be visited more frequently by bees than ornamental gardens or lawns. Homeowners as well as stewards of school and community gardens can improve habitat for bees by installing pollinator gardens, and managing pollinator garden registration programs is likely to be a successful strategy for organizations aiming to facilitate bee conservation through public outreach.

While my results suggest benefits of pollinator gardens to bees generally, it is important to note that honey bees appear to receive greater benefits than native bees. This could be due in part to pollinator gardens' failure to increase the availability of native flowers. While honey bees are generalists and can feed on a wide range of flower types, many native bees are specialists that require a particular family or genus of flowering plants. Therefore, gardeners may be able to increase the benefits of pollinator gardens for native bees in particular by planting a diversity of species that are native to Illinois.

I would like to extend a big thank you to the Illinois Native Plant Society for helping to fund this project!

Lauren Lynch is a PhD Candidate, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Plant Profile:

Looking for Leaves – The Joy of Trolling For Trout Lily

By Susan McIntyre.

Every spring, we eagerly count the days until enchanting tapestries of spring wildflowers emerge to blanket the forest floor. We call these flowers “spring ephemerals” because many of them sprout, bloom, seed, and senesce all within a couple of months. They have to get everything done before the overstory of trees have fully leafed out to block the sun. With such a fast turn-around, they are necessarily low-growing, and they are found most abundantly in rich woods with plenty of nutrients and relatively little disturbance or competition.

Though we delight in their cheerful little flowers, one of the neatest things about many of our spring ephemerals is that, even before they begin flowering, they put on a different sort of show for those who take the time to look. Unlike the bright cheery green of many later-leafing plants (especially the trees and shrubs), many spring ephemerals have more subdued colors and more interestingly shaped leaves. Some plants that maintain leaves through winter, like phlox and hepatica, have brownish-red leaves that nearly perfectly match the leaf litter. Some species may be decorated with stripes or mottles of white, green, brown, or burgundy. The result for botanists and plant enthusiasts is a sort of Easter egg hunt, without the gawdy pastels.

This certainly is true for one of my favorite spring ephemerals, trout lily (*Erythronium* spp.). Sure, I appreciate its weird flower as much as any enthusiast. How could you not like a flower that starts its morning dangling like a soggy handkerchief and then peels itself back to look like those cartoon images of an exploded shotgun barrel? And it has those absurdly long anthers dangling out to make sure that any passing insect can land and get covered in pollen on its way up to the nectar, like it’s the world’s stickiest, dustiest rope climb. Of course, the dainty pink/lavender-backed white tepals of *E. albidum* (white trout lily) and *E. mesochoreum* (prairie trout lily) are not nearly as eye-catching as the vibrant burgundy-backed yellow tepals and lemony-yellow to red-orange to burgundy anthers of *E. americanum* (yellow trout lily) and—the most common trout lily in my home state of North Carolina—*E. umbilicatum* (dimpled trout lily).



E. albidum doing the ‘soggy hanky.’
(Photo: Susan McIntyre)



E. americanum.
(Photo: Paul Marcum)



Trout lily leaf.
(Photo: Paul Marcum)

But what I *really* want to talk about is those *LEAVES*!

The common name of trout lily refers to the lovely mottling of the smooth lance-shaped leaves, reminiscent of brook trout scales flashing through the water. Fun facts: Apparently, the name “trout lily” was coined (or at least marketed) by naturalist John Burroughs in 1890, who was dissatisfied by the inadequately appreciative common names (adder’s tongue?!) for the plant. He also pushed for “fawn lily,” citing their dappled pelt and some nonsense about “alert ears....”

Susan McIntyre is vice president of the Forest Glen Chapter of INPS and a plant ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey in Champaign, Illinois.

Control of *Solidago altissima* in Open Oak Woodlands

By Karen Glennemeier, 2020 INPS Research Grant Program.

Tall goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*) is native to North America but spreads aggressively and often must be actively controlled in order to support native plant diversity. Many stewards are searching for the most effective and appropriate control methods within open oak woodlands where light levels have recently increased due to ecological management. Two methods that have shown anecdotal promise are mowing/scything mid-summer and interseeding of native species into *S. altissima* patches.

Our study is testing the effectiveness of scything and interseeding—used alone and in combination—at controlling *S. altissima* and improving surrounding Floristic Quality in Somme Woods, a managed oak woodland in Cook County. We hope to provide actionable advice to stewards looking to restore oak woodland health using accessible, cost-effective methods.

So far, we’ve confirmed that cutting *S. altissima* in June results in significantly lower abundance of this species in September.

However, many cut plants had re-grown to about 20 cm height by the September monitoring, so we re-cut any remaining stems after collecting our abundance data. We’ll be very interested to measure *S. altissima* abundance in 2021, to learn the extent to which one season of clipping suppressed growth into the next growing season.

We also learned, not surprisingly, that scything and hand-clipping are labor-intensive control methods that may not be suitable for large areas but that may, if effective, be just right for higher-quality areas where precision is important and a large time investment is justified. Some of us found that using hand clippers was more efficient and effective than using a scythe, but experienced scythers may find this tool works best for them.

This summer, we’ll also be eagerly monitoring our study plots to learn whether *S. altissima* abundance is lower in plots where we sowed a diverse seed mix in 2020, compared to control plots. In other words, is competition alone enough to suppress this aggressive goldenrod? And we’ll be comparing plots where we both sowed seeds and cut *S. altissima* to plots where we only sowed seeds, to learn whether floristic quality is increasing faster in plots with the combined treatment.



Tall goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*).
Photo: Paul Marcum.

Funding for this study was provided by an INPS 2020 Research Grant to Stephen Packard, Principal Investigator, also citizen scientist and site steward, North Branch Restoration Project; and by the Dr. Scholl Foundation. Many thanks to Sai Ramakrishna, Katie Kucera, Emma Leavens, and Paul Swanson for their help applying treatments and conducting monitoring, and to the many volunteer site stewards who helped locate appropriate habitat, collect seeds, and otherwise supported this work. This research was conducted under an Ecological Research Permit from the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

*Karen Glennemeier has been studying and restoring woodlands, prairies, and wetlands with the Chicago Wilderness conservation community since 2001—first with Audubon Chicago Region and then with John G. Shedd Aquarium before founding her current venture, Habitat Research, LLC. Karen holds a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Michigan and has a soft spot for *Brachyelytrum erectum*.*

Invasive Species News: Wineberry

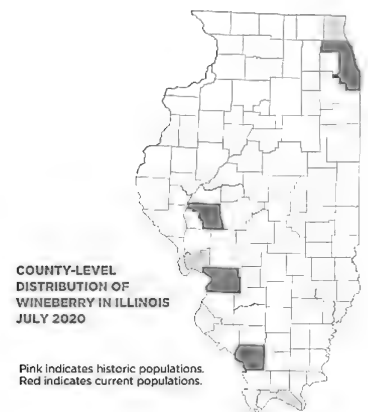


Wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*), also called wine raspberry or Japanese wineberry, is an invasive shrub in the *Rubus* genus (blackberries and raspberries) that can form dense thickets and has the potential to impact native ecosystems. As of 2020, wineberry was not regulated in Illinois, but recent discoveries of new populations in Madison and Jackson counties have prompted an increased concern about this plant's invasive potential in Illinois.

Wineberry populations seem to prefer open disturbed sites, such as canopy gaps in forests or old fields, for initial seedling establishment; however, once established, populations can persist in more closed conditions. Established wineberry populations have been found in a wide variety of site conditions, including growing in relatively heavy shade to full sun, dry soils to seasonally flooded bottomlands, and rocky infertile sites to rich soils. In addition to spread via fruit, wineberry can also spread by layering or tip-rooting, where the tips of the canes come into contact with the ground and form roots. This allows wineberry to form dense stands, with the potential to limit tree regeneration and development of the native understory flora.

This is a priority species to watch since several new populations of wineberry have been recently reported in Illinois. For more information and how to report any suspect populations of wineberry in Illinois, see this Wineberry Factsheet by Chris Evans, University of Illinois Extension Forestry and Research Specialist at

https://extension.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/wineberry_factsheet_0.pdf.



Other News & Web Links

Beverly Ann Mohlenbrock, March 30, 1937 - March 11, 2021

Beverly Ann Mohlenbrock passed away on March 11 in her home. She is survived by her husband, Dr. Robert H. Mohlenbrock of Carbondale and their three children, seven grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. She was devoted to her husband Robert, accompanying him on nearly every fieldtrip in their company, Biotic Consultants, in which she was President, and typing all of his manuscripts. Beverly was also a noted porcelain artist, some of her work being exhibited at the Porcelain Art Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and she is the author of six books. Please see her complete obituary at <https://www.crawshawfh.com/obituaries/Beverly-Mohlenbrock/#!/Obituary>.

Watch

- *Discovering Prairie with Floyd Swink*, produced by the Save the Prairie Society and Video Documentation Fund. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Va9yFRfZHIM>. A 20-minute with Dr. Floyd Allen Swink (1921-2000), a botanist, teacher of natural history, and author of several floras of the Chicago region.
- *Let The Sun Shine In To Save Illinois Oak Forests*, produced by [Let the Sun Shine In! \(LSSI\)](#), an innovative conservation program aimed at maintaining and restoring oak-dominated forest communities for the benefits of both wildlife and the people of southern Illinois. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjFAYSEgj9A> The 10-minute video shows how partnerships among botanists, foresters, and public and private landowners are using cutting, thinning and fire to increase sunlight to the forest floor and regenerate oak forests and ecosystems.



NPR Feature About Illinois Nature Preserves

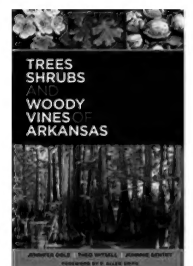
Listen to or read a feature titled “Illinois’ 596 Nature Preserves Need More Than Protection From Development To Thrive” at WBEZ.org. The article focuses on the new Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves and prairie restoration.

Saving the Sand Savanna

Read an article about the Braidwood Sands, a rare and exotic ecosystem that is slowly being restored in southern Will County. Featuring INPS past president Floyd Catchpole, the Forest Preserve’s land management program coordinator, the story describes the intensive restoration efforts of the past seven years. <https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/News-Events/Big-Features/Saving-the-Sand-Savanna>

Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of Arkansas

The most comprehensive accounting of the woody plants of Arkansas has just been published by The University of Arkansas Press. A field guide designed for outdoor use, *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of Arkansas* is an encyclopedic resource for identification and appreciation of the state’s trees, shrubs, and woody vines. Copies may be purchased at <https://www.uapress.com/product/trees-shrubs-and-woody-vines-of-arkansas/>.



Wild Ones Offer Native Gardens Design Website

Wild Ones is a nonprofit organization that promotes landscaping practices focusing on the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities. Their website provides practical, educationally-sound information on native landscaping developed specifically for first-time native plant gardeners looking for help getting started. The site also features a growing number of free, downloadable native garden designs created by professional landscape designers for multiple ecoregions in the United States, taking into account various light, soil and moisture conditions. You can check out this resource at <https://nativegardendesigns.wildones.org/> and also register for a free “Meet the Designers” online event to be held on April 7.

Milkweed Pollination: A Series of Fortunate Events

Enjoy an entertaining and educational article by Chris Helzer, Director of Science for The Nature Conservancy in Nebraska on <https://prairieecologist.com/2021/01/26/milkweed-pollination-a-series-of-fortunate-events/>. “Why do things the simple easy way when there’s a more complicated option available?” seems to be the pollination strategy of milkweed plants. Learn about the series of accidental steps that need to occur to produce the next generation of milkweed!

Evidence of benefits from seed-addition in degraded prairie.

Another article by Chris Helzer, Director of Science for The Nature Conservancy in Nebraska on <https://prairieecologist.com/2019/01/02/its-working-evidence-of-benefits-from-seed-addition-in-degraded-prairie/>. Many TNC prairies along the Platte River were in fairly poor condition from chronic overgrazing and broadcast herbicide use prior to the Conservancy’s ownership. Managing those sites with fire and/or moderate grazing was enough to reduce the dominance of the invasive grasses, but not enough to bring back many missing wildflower species. After much trial and error, they came up with a technique of broadcasting seed onto recently-burned prairies and then using grazing to reduce competition from grasses. In the early days, progress was slow and hard to see, but over time the grass-dominated grasslands started to gain more and more color. Read the entire article for more details and study results.

Research into Climate Change Effects

Many temperate herbs now flower earlier than a few decades ago. A recently-published study characterizes the phenology of the entire annual cycle of 43 prominent herb species in Trelease Woods, a 24.5-ha fragment of temperate deciduous forest, dominated by sugar maple, near Urbana, Illinois, from 1993 to 2017. Overall, the study addresses the hypothesis that a change in date of a specific phenological event (beginning and ending) and duration of a phase in the annual life cycle is correlated with a specific component of climate change. Published in *Ecological Monographs*, Volume 90 Issue 4, in November 2020 by the Ecological Society of America, the study is available to read online at <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ecm.1421>.

Botany Humor



ILLINOIS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)

flower. Photo: Mike Weis

The Harbinger Spring 2021

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☐ Grand Prairie (Bloomington) ☐ Southern (Carbondale)
☐ Kankakee Torrent ☐ Other/Uncertain _____

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